DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL
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ABC CITES NINE CLERKS IN BLYTHE FOR SELLING ALCOHOL TO MINORS

(Blythe) - Investigators of the California Department Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) cited nine clerks on August 5, 2005 for selling alcohol to minors. The actions were the result of a compliance check operation in which minors under the direct supervision of the investigators, attempted to purchase alcohol from 16 separate retail licensees in the City of Blythe.

Those who sold to the minor face a minimum fine of $250, and/or 24 to 32 hours of community service for a first violation. In addition, ABC will take administrative action against the business's liquor license. That may include a fine, a suspension of the liquor license, or the permanent revocation of the license.

ABC is conducting the compliance checks state-wide to reduce the availability of alcohol to minors. Young people under the age of 21 have a higher rate of drunk driving fatalities than the general adult population.

Minor Decoy operations have been conducted by local law enforcement throughout the state since the 1980's. When the program first began, the violation rate of retail establishments selling to minors was as high as 40 to 50 percent. When conducted on a routine basis, the rate has dropped in some cities to 10 percent or even below. The latest violation rate state-wide is almost 16 percent.

In 1994, the California Supreme Court ruled unanimously that use of underage decoys is a valid tool of law enforcement to ensure that liquor licensees are complying with the law.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency.

ABC is a department of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, which is under the direction of Secretary Sunne Wright McPeak, a member of the Governor's Cabinet.

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